

A SECOND
TREATISE
 ON THE
Notes of the Church:
 AS A
SUPPLEMENT
 TO THE
SERMON

Preach'd at

SALTERS-HALL, January 16, 1734.

Being the Substance of two **SERMONS**
 preach'd at the *Wednesday* Lecture at the *Old*
Jury, Jan. 22, and 29.

By **SAMUEL CHANDLER.**

Omnes confitentur, in sola vera Ecclesia esse veram fidem,
 veram peccatorum remissionem, veram spem salutis
 eternæ. *Bellarmin. de Nor. Eccles.*

THE SECOND EDITION.

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I TIM. ~~iii~~ 14 & 15

These things I write unto thee,—that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thy self in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth.

HAVING in a former discourse, though delivered in ^a another place, considered the scripture characters of the Church of Christ; and several also of those marks which Cardinal *Belarmine* lays down as the notes of the true Church, in order to prove that this character belongs to the Church of *Rome*; I beg leave here to resume that subject, because I then left it imperfect. The Cardinal's notes which I then considered, were these: 1. The name *Catholic*, assumed by the Church of *Rome*. 2. *Antiquity*. 3. *Perpetual and uninterrupted duration*. 4. The amplitude, or multitude, and variety of believers. 5. The succession of Bishops in the Church of *Rome*, from the Apostles to the pre-

^a *Salters-Hall, Thursday, Jan. 16, 1734.*



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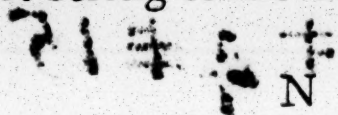
I T I M. ~~iii~~ 14 # 15

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sent times. 6. Agreement in doctrine with the antient church. 7. The union of the members amongst themselves, and with the head. 8. Sanctity, or holiness of doctrine. As to these, I have shewn, either that they are no marks of the Church of Christ; or that if they are, they do not belong to the Church of *Rome*.



NOTE IX.

The Cardinal's ninth note is, *Efficacy of doctrine; for the true Church alone, says he, possesseth that doctrine, which converteth the Soul*^b. But, upon a little consideration, it will appear, that this note is far from serving the Cardinal's purpose: For the efficacy and success of doctrines, may be ascribed to various causes.

Sometimes to the natural, intrinsic excellency of the doctrines themselves; their being evidently agreeable to truth and reason, and tending to promote valuable and worthy ends. To these causes, the success of the gospel religion was owing upon its first publication, though preached by men contemptible, as to outward appearance, who had neither arms nor eloquence to enforce it on, or recommend it to the world; yea, tho' the doctrines they preached had no temporal advantages to recommend them, but the profession of them was almost sure to be attended with persecution, poverty, and death. And this success of the gospel, as it was partly owing to its na-

^b Efficacia doctrinae; sola enim vera Ecclesia habet doctrinam, — convertentem animam. *Cap. 12.*

eral excellency and goodness; its approving it
 self to the reason and consciences of mankind;
 and its evident tendency to promote the highest
 happiness of men, in the knowledge, service, and
 acceptance of God; was, amongst many others,
 the good argument of its truth, and agreeable-
 ness to the will of God. Whereas the peculiar
 doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, cannot possibly
 have any efficacy upon these accounts; because
 they are many of them absurd, and contradictory
 to all the principles of reason, and almost all of
 them calculated to promote the power and profit
 of the priests, and to bring the Church of God
 to the most abject and deplorable slavery.

The doctrine of Transubstantiation is an insult
 upon common sense; an objection which *Bel-
 larmine* urges against some of the principles of
 the *Lutherans*, to shew they cannot be true: For,
 how can that be the body and blood of Christ,
 which our sight, smell, feeling, and tasting, as-
 sure us is nothing more than a wafer, or piece of
 bread? How can the individual body of Christ,
 which is but one, and which is now in heaven,
 be multiplied into a thousand bodies at once, and
 be in the same instant in a thousand places, and
 be eaten a thousand times over upon earth, and yet,
 at the same time, remain whole and uneaten in
 heaven? How is it possible that Christ, who
 instituted the Sacrament, could give himself to
 his disciples with his own hands, see himself
 eaten, swallowed, and devoured by them, with-

*Aperte repugnat veritati, ut Augustinus scribat, injuriam facere
 hominis sensibus qui hoc dicunt. De Not. Eccles. Not. 8.*

out

out being eaten, swallowed, and devoured at all; be at the same time broken, and unbroken; within his Apostles, and without them; be at the same instant solid as bread, and liquid as wine; be as big as a man, and as small as a morsel of bread? Was ever invention so monstrous as this? Ever any doctrine compounded of such palpable and stupid absurdities? Is it not an outrage upon every thing called sense or reason?

Again, the worship of images, pictures, dead mens bodies, relicks, and the like things, is a contradiction to the plainest dictates of truth and reason, which lead us to the adoration and worship of God, the supreme and ultimate object of worship; who cannot be represented by any sensible appearances, nor approve of any veneration given by rational beings to dead, inanimate objects, *that have neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor tongues to speak with.*

I am willing to allow, that the worship paid to these things is relative only, or given to them for the relation they have to the objects they represent: So also was the worship paid by many Heathens^d to the images, temples, and altars, of their gods; which, notwithstanding, the Scriptures condemn as a very heinous sin, and monstrous impiety: And with the highest reason; because dead and lifeless images, or pictures, can

^d ΠειρωμενΘ δὴ αἰ τι περὶ τῶν θεῶν εὐσεβεῖς διανοοῖται, καὶ μετὰ τινΘ ἀποβλεπόντων εἰς τὰ ἱερά τῶν θεῶν, καὶ τὰ ἀγαλματὰ τιμῆς καὶ οὐκ ὁσιότητος, σεβόμενΘ ὥσπερ ἀν εἰ παρόντας εὐσεβῆς θεοῦ. Ἀγαλματὰ γὰρ καὶ βωμοὶ, καὶ πυρεΘ ἀσβεστὰ φυλάκων, καὶ πάντα ἀπλῶς τὰ τοιαῦτα σύμβολα, οἱ πατέρες εἶδον τῆς παρρησίας τῶν θεῶν, οὐκ ἵνα ἐκεῖνα θεοὺς νομισώμεν, ἀλλ' ἵνα δι' αὐτῶν τῶς θεοῦ δεῖρα πεισώμεν. Julian, p. 293. Edit. Spanhem.

no proper representations of the living, spiritual, and invisible God; and therefore not worthy of any relative veneration, because those images, or pictures, cannot in the nature of things have any possible relation to him, or convey to the mind any true idea of him.

As to the images and pictures of Christ, the making and worshiping them is an absurd and irrational superstition. For besides that, there is no warrant for this in the New Testament records, 'tis impossible to make any true representation of him, as exalted to the right hand of glory; or that an idol, made by the statuary or carver, and called by his name, should deserve that outward prostration, or inward veneration, which is due to Christ himself; the wood, the stone, and metal, having no more intrinsic excellency, and bearing no more likeness or relation to Christ, after the artificer hath formed it, and called it by his name, than when growing in the tree, or buried in the bowels of the earth.

And, as to the images and pictures of the *Virgin Mary*, and the Saints, together with their dead bodies and relicks, the worshiping them is, if possible, worse folly and superstition than the former; because there is no reason or precept for worshiping those persons themselves, and, by consequence, none for worshiping their images, remnants of their bodies, or any thing that belongs to them. And if the worshiping them without warrant, yea, in opposition to the plainest intimations to the contrary, is real idolatry; what name of reproach must the worshiping or venerating their images and relicks deserve?

deserve? This practice of worshiping dead bodies, and scraps of bodies, is more stupid and absurd, than almost any thing to be found amongst the *Pagans*; who, though they often deified their dead heroes, yet either burned their bodies, or let them remain quiet and undisturbed in their graves and sepulchres: And on this account *Julian* reproaches the Christians of his time, because *they* turned to the worship of the dead and their relicks. And in another place, he says, *Who can sufficiently abhor your practice, in adding so many new dead persons to him who formerly died? You have filled all places with sepulchres and monuments, though 'tis no where commanded you to kneel before and worship them; yea, in opposition to the words of Jesus, Matt. xxiii. 27.*

Other instances might be mentioned; such as worshiping in an unknown tongue, and keeping the Scriptures from the knowledge of the people; because common sense and reason evidently assure us, that there can be no rational devotion without knowledge; and that if the scripture be the word of God, and contains a revelation of the divine will to all mankind, all mankind must be concerned to understand it, and must by necessary consequence have a right to read and search it.

^e ΕΠΙ ΤΗΣ ΝΕΚΡΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΤΑ ΛΕΙΨΑΝΑ ΜΕΤΑΤΕΤΡΑΜΜΕΝΟΣ. *Julian*
p. 43.

^f Πολλὰς ἐπεσαγόντες τῷ παλαιῷ νεκρῷ τὰς πρόσφατας νεκρὰς
τίς ἀνὰ πρὸς ἀξίαν βδέλυξῃται; πάντα ἐπληρώσατε τῶν καὶ μνη-
μάτων, καὶ τοὶ οὐκ εἰρήναι παρ' ὑμῖν ἔδαμκε τοῖς ταῖς πρόσκυ-
θεῖσιν καὶ περιεπεῖν αὐτὰς, &c. *Cyril. cont. Jul. p. 335.*

And

And as these, and the like doctrines, are evidently absurd and contradictory to the principles of reason ; so they are plainly calculated, not to promote any real, wise and valuable purpose, but to aggrandize the power of the priests, and to be a lasting fund of riches to the clergy. What an high opinion must the people have of their priests, if they can be brought to believe, that by muttering a few words, they can change a morsel of bread into their Saviour and God? That they can grant them dispensations and indulgences, and authoritatively absolve them from all their guilt? That they can deliver them from all the pains of Purgatory, and send them straight to heaven by the repetition of a few masses for their souls? How large are the revenues that flow from the profitable doctrines of Purgatory, masses, priestly absolutions, penances, and the like superstitions? How vast the influence, which the priests and confessors have over private persons, families, and nations, by auricular confessions, when they are let into the secrets of mens conduct and consciences, and have a power to enjoin them what discipline, and penances, and satisfactions they please? The truth is, the whole system of Popery is a scheme of ambition and worldly policy, calculated not to promote knowledge and virtue, and the happiness of mankind, but the dominion and grandure of the priests, at the expence, and upon the most certain ruins of each of these dear and valuable interests. So that let the efficacy of their doctrines be what it will, it can be no evidence that their church is the church of Christ; because that

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efficacy

efficacy cannot proceed from the intrinsic excellency of these doctrines, their conformity to truth and reason, and their tendency to promote the real interest and happiness of mankind.

The efficacy of particular doctrines, however absurd and false, and particularly of those of the church of *Rome*, may be very easily accounted for, by reasons that will reflect but little honour upon the success that may attend them. When doctrines are invented suitable to the corrupt passions and affections of mankind, such doctrines as tend to render them easy in their vices, and reconcile salvation with the immoralities of a wicked life; 'tis no wonder that even the generality of mankind, who are led more by the instincts of sense, than the dictates of reason, should be found to countenance and embrace them; for as *Bellarmino* observes, under this very note, *What difficulty is there to instil poison into a man, who is ready prepared to take it?* Hence *St. Paul* ascribes the prevalence of error to this very cause. Thus he tells the *Thessalonians*, that God would send a strong delusion, that those should believe a lie who had pleasure in unrighteousness, 2 *Thess.* ii. 10, 11, 12. And in his second epistle to *Timothy*, he says, *evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived*, Chap. ii. 13.

Some of the doctrines of *Mahometanism* were thus made palatable to the inclinations of those, to whom that impostor addressed himself; and that this is really the case with many of the

⁵ Quæ enim difficultas est instillare venenum homini parato ad id sumendum?

doctrines of Popery, hath been shewn under a former head.

Again; the prevalence or efficacy of corrupt doctrines, is oftentimes owing to deep ignorance and the want of means of better information. To this the superstitions and idolatries of *Paganism* were in a great measure to be attributed. This was one reason of the successes of *Mahomet*; and of the efficacy of his doctrine amongst the *Arabians*; and the Papists well know that their own errors and antichristian practices are supported by the same foundation. They have deprived the people of the sacred scriptures, and of all other books that may tend to their information. They rigorously prohibit all inquiries and disputes about religion, and inculcate an implicit faith in the dictates of the church, and represent it as an heinous sin, so much as to question or doubt about the truth of her decisions. And is it any wonder that error should flourish under the protection of ignorance?

Add to this the great subtleties, and many arts they make use of, to propagate their doctrines; viz. those pretended miracles which they boast of in the church of *Rome*, whereby they impose on the credulity of the weak multitude, and instil into their minds an high veneration for the greatest absurdities and corruptions they have introduced into the house of God. Thus to persuade them that the consecrated wafer is the body and blood of Christ, they have invented stories of wafers dropping blood when they have been

^a See Note VIII.

pierced and cut by wicked Hereticks; lively representations of which, in pictures, I my self have seen publicly hung up in their churches, for the admiration and establishment of the deluded people. To confirm them in the worship of images, they tell them of their sweating, moving their eyes, bowing their heads, and performing many wonderful cures; which are either the tricks of cunning priests, or owing to satanical delusions; it being impossible that God should perform any miracles for the establishment of so impious a superstition. In like manner the liquefaction of St. *Januarius's* blood, the miraculous cures which have been said to be wrought by relicks, and the like rogueries of the priests, are arts to keep up an impure veneration for dead bodies, bits of bones, and the fragments of crosses and tattered garments. Thus also they have feigned apparitions of spirits tortured in Purgatory, desiring the prayers of the living; and of other spirits delivered from pain and prison by their prayers and masses; to propagate the notion, and establish the people in the gainful doctrines of Purgatory and masses. It would be endless to mention all the instances of this kind that may be produced, and the numberless frauds that have been used to impose on the people; many of which have been discovered to the shame and confusion of the authors and practisers of them.

Besides this, they frequently endeavour to support and colour over their doctrines by the sound of scripture-expressions; or by altering the words, and corrupting the sense of it. Thus, to prevent
their

their peoples abhorrence of image and idol worship, they have sometimes taken away the second commandment; and, to keep up the number of ten, have divided the tenth into two. To prove the doctrine of Transubstantiation, they urge the literal sense of the words, *This is my body*. And, by the same way, they might prove that Christ is a door, and a vine; and that God himself is possessed of all bodily parts and passions. To prove that holy order is a sacrament instituted by Christ, they cite those words, *Do this in remembrance of me*; which a child may see do not relate to Christ's granting his Apostles a power to consecrate the bread and wine, but to their eating the bread in remembrance of him. In support of the doctrine of Purgatory, they urge, *He himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire*; to which they have added, in some of their versions, *by the fire of Purgatory*. Innumerable such abuses may be easily seen by those, who will be at the pains to consult their confessions and catechisms.

And to render all these arts, and the like, the more effectual, the *Romish* priests pretend great compassion for the souls of people, and boldly tell them there is no salvation out of their church; that, as Protestants, they are in a damnable state; that Protestants allow salvation in the communion of the church of *Rome*; that they are divided amongst themselves, and that they censure and condemn each other for their differences; and to render all these arts the more effectual, they strengthen them with money and gifts, and other the like appearances of charity.

And

And finally, where all these things will not do, they have other methods, not less powerful, to convince and convert gainfayers, and secure the desired efficacy to their doctrines. 'Tis well known that Heresy amongst the Papists is a capital crime, and punished in the most dreadful manner that the art of man can invent; and that, according to them, it consists in believing any thing contrary to the received opinions of their church, or not believing in all matters as the church believes. Now how is it possible that what they call Heresy, which is in reality truth and righteousness, should ever spread amongst them, when they scruple no methods of injustice and violence to suppress it in its rise, and prevent its growth? This hath been their way in all ages, either to convert men by force, or destroy all opposers of their errors and superstitions. Thus they propagated and supported them in *Great Britain* by fire and faggot; in *Ireland* by the massacre of above one hundred and forty thousand Protestants; in *France* by publishing crusadoes against Hereticks, destroying their cities, and murdering thousands for their religion and consciences; and by the *Parisian*ⁱ massacre, for which, though contrived and carried on, and executed with diabolical perfidiousness and cruelty, a jubilee was appointed at *Paris*, and solemn thanks returned to God, as though it had been a sacrifice acceptable to him. And not only thus, but as *Thuanus*^k tell us, they received the news of it at *Rome* with transports

ⁱ Thuanus, Vol. III. p. 140. Edit. Buck;

^k Ibid. p. 152.

of pleasure; and the Pope and Cardinals instantly repaired to St. *Mark's*, to thank God for so great a favour conferred on the See of *Rome*, and appointed a jubilee over the whole Christian world, for this slaughter of the Hereticks in *France*. And I have now by me an oration of *Antony Muretus*, in praise of *Charles IX.* pronounced at *Rome* before Pope *Gregory XIII.* in which he ¹ blesses that memorable night in which this accursed slaughter was committed; extols the king, queen-mother, and brethren of the king, for the share they had in this execrable villany; and calls the Pope himself *most blessed Father*, for his going in procession to return thanks to God and St. *Lewis* for the welcome news, when brought to him. And even to this day they support their superstitions by dragoonings, imprisonments and death, in that kingdom; and in *Spain*, and *Portugal*, and *Italy*, by the accursed cruelties of an Inquisition.

O noctem illam memorabilem, et in fastis eximie alicujus notæ electione signandam! quæ paucorum seditioforum interritu, regem presentis cæcis periculo, regnum a perpetua civilium bellorum fortune liberavit. Qua quidem nocte stellas equidem ipsas luxisse tanto nitidius arbitror, et flumen Sequanam majores undas volvisse, quam illa impurorum hominum cadavera evolveret et exoneraret in mare. O felicissimam mulierem Catharinam regis matrem, quæ cum annos admirabili prudentia parique sollicitudine regnum filio, cum regno conservasset, tum demum secura regnantem filium adiret! O regis fratres, ipsos quoque beatos!—O diem denique illum plenum lætitiæ et hilaritatis, quo tu, Beatissime Pater, hoc ad nuncio allato, Deo immortalis, et Divo Hludovico regi, cujus hæc pervigilio evenerant, gratias acturus, indictas a te supplicatas pedes obristi! Quis autem optabilior ad te nuncius adferri poterat? aut nos ipsi quid felicius optare poteramus principum pontificis tui? *Muret. Orat. Vol. I. p. 197, 198. Edit. Lubec.*

You

You see here the causes of the efficacy of Popery; and is it any wonder it should prevail, under such methods to propagate it? Or can it be any proof that the Church of *Rome* is the Church of Christ, because her doctrines are successful, when that success is owing to such violent and bloody measures? ^m *Bellarmino* himself, when urged with the success of *Mahometanism*, rightly objects, that *the great numbers who embraced it, were drawn over by the terror of arms, not by the force and efficacy of its doctrine*; and that *Mahomet himself taught in his Alcoran, that men are to be forced by war to the faith*. If this be an objection against *Mahometanism*, it must be equally so against Popery; which teaches, and useth the same methods of propagation, and hath spilt more blood in support of her Antichristian doctrines, than hath been ever spilt by the *Mahometan* princes, merely on account of their religion. So that the efficacy of the doctrines of *Mahometanism* and Popery, is owing to the same measures of cruelty and persecution; and therefore, if mere success or efficacy of doctrine be a sign of the Church of Christ, *Mahometans* have as much a claim to that sacred character as the Papists.

There is indeed a very powerful influence which Popery generally hath on the minds of men, which is not much to the reputation and credit of it. For when once this false religion

^m *Mahumetani autem traxerunt quidem multos; sed terrore armorum, non vi et efficacia doctrine. Quare ipsemet Mahumetus in Alcorano, c. 18, 19. docet, bello cogendos homines ad fidem. De Not. Eccles. cap. 12.*

hath got hold of their minds; it renders them obstinate, and averse to all information and farther knowledge, and enemies to the very means of their conviction and salvation: It fills them with a censorious, uncharitable spirit, and with rancour and malice towards all who differ from them; it too often prepares them for the most execrable villanies, and changes the natural sentiments and dictates of compassion and tenderness into an unrelenting hardness of heart, and an infernal satisfaction in the punishments and miseries of others. For as Dr. *Geddes* observes of the *Portugueze*, though all other malefactors besides Hereticks are greatly lamented and pitied by them, when they suffer death; yet, when Hereticks are roasted in lingring fires, and crying out under their exquisite tortures, *their sufferings are beheld, by persons of both sexes and all ages, with such transports of joy and satisfaction, as are not to be met with on any other occasions whatsoever.* Such is the spirit of their religion! such the dreadful efficacy of their doctrine!

Whenever these are the natural effects of any principles, nothing can be more certain than that they must be contrary to truth and religion. And, indeed, nothing can be more fallacious, than to argue from the prevalence of any doctrines to the truth and divine authority of them: For the *Mahometan* religion is much more universal than that of Christianity to this day; and amongst Christians, *Arianism* could once boast of its successes, and of having proselyted many nations and kingdoms. And at this day, how many nations embrace the Reformation, and the

doctrines of the Protestant religion? And therefore, if the mere efficacy of doctrine be a certain note of the Church of Christ, the Papists must allow that we are as much the true Church of Christ as themselves; and they have no other way to extricate themselves out of this difficulty, but by saying with ⁿ *Bellarmino*, that *Hereticks only deceive men, but cannot convert them to the faith*; which is shamefully to beg the question, but not to answer the objection; and Protestants may, with the highest reason, retort the Cardinal's words upon himself. The Papists only deceive men, but cannot convert them to the faith. *Papists have indeed the scripture, but will not suffer it to be read by the people, and have not the true sense of scripture: Nor is it any wonder that they sometimes pervert Protestants; for men are prone to go down into the broad and easy way which Popery opens; and God suffers it to be so, because of their ingratitude, who having been once enlightned, have not brought forth good fruits, answerable to the light they have received.*

To conclude this head; the mere efficacy, or want of efficacy in any doctrine, proves nothing what the nature of it is. As error it self hath oftentimes amazing success, and gains over innumerable proselytes; so truth is oftentimes de-

ⁿ Majorem partem Gothorum fuisse ab Arianis deceptam. Non igitur convertunt homines ad fidem Hæretici, non possunt. *Ibid.*

^o Hæretici habent quidem scripturam, sed non habent verum sensum scripturarum. — Neque etiam mirum est quod Catholicos pervertant; nam prони sunt homines ad descensum ad viam latam et facilem quam illi apperunt. Et Deus id fieri finit propter ingratitude eorum, qui semel sunt illuminati, et lumini accepto bonis operibus non respondent. *Id. Ibid.*

crucified and rejected; and yet remains truth, tho' she hath few or none to follow her. Even our Saviour himself was wickedly treated by the Jews; and he had but few who received him, or embraced his doctrine. His Apostles after him were opposed and persecuted, and the number of converts they made but comparatively small with the rest of mankind. And yet they were the messengers of God, and their religion founded on truth, and worthy the acceptance of all mankind: And the reason why their doctrine had no more efficacy and success, was not any defect in its intrinsic excellency, or want in the evidence which attended it; but the sinful prejudices and vicious passions of men themselves, who being enemies to righteousness were the enemies of truth, and therefore enemies to the pure and uncorrupted doctrines of Christianity.

N O T E X.

The next Note is, *the holiness of the lives of the authors, or first fathers of our religion; such as the patriarchs and prophets, then apostles and teachers, and lastly the founders of religious orders; who, as Bellarmine affirm, were pious, chaste, and sober, and endowed with all manner of virtues; whereas Hereticks are all of them very bad persons, and not one of them good.*

But I am apprehensive that the Cardinal will not do his Church much good by this Note:

P. Sa. Sanctitas vitæ auctorum, sive primorum patrum nostræ religionis.

N. t. clef. c. p. 13

Ex hereticis nullus est bonus. Ibid.

For as Protestants, we acknowledge no other authors of our religion but Jesus Christ and his Apostles, the holiness of whose lives is a great recommendation of the doctrines they taught; and, consequently, by whomsoever that doctrine is embraced, they may glory in this, as one evidence amongst others of its divine original: And therefore this is so far from being a note that any one particular church is more the Church of Christ than another, that it is an honour which all churches may boast of, who maintain their doctrines in their original purity.

As to all others, we renounce them as the authors of our religion. For in the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants: And though the fathers and doctors of the Church may be allowed, some of them, to have been excellent and good men; yet they were fallible and liable to errors, and had their defects and blemishes as well as virtues. It were easy to shew this of some of the first writers in the Christian church. Now the real sanctity of good men is no vindication of their errors, and of consequence no argument that the Church of *Rome* is the true Church, if she hath embraced their errors. The truly primitive * fathers however knew nothing of her distinguishing doctrines, and therefore she hath no more countenance from them than she hath from the scriptures of infallible truth. And if the holiness of such fathers add any credit to any cause, this honour will accrue to the Protestant churches; who embrace all the principles they taught from

* See Note II;

the word of God, and reject their errors because contrary to that word.

As to the ancient Hereticks, such as *Theobutes*, *Simon Magus*, *Valentinus*, *Marcian*, *Montanus*, *Arius*, and others mentioned by *Bellarmino*, and censured by him as proud, and violent disturbers of the Church; Protestants neither acknowledge their authority, nor embrace their heresies; and therefore whatever were their particular vices, as Protestants are not their patrons, defenders, and imitators, they reflect no more dishonour upon them or their principles, than they do upon the clergy and members of the Church of *Rome*.

And when the Cardinal adds, that *the sects of his age*, meaning the different parties of the Reformation, *sprung from ambition, pride, envy, and hatred*; if this was true, 'tis nothing to the purpose. For if the first Reformers were influenced by these motives, yet if they really preached the religion of Christ, may we not say with *St. Paul*, *Some preach Christ even of envy and strife, and of contention; supposing to add affliction to my bonds? What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached: And therein I do rejoice; yea, and will rejoice*, Phil. i. 15—18.

And indeed the question is not how the Reformation came in, or by what kind of instruments it was carried on? but whether the Reformation is the cause of truth and genuine Christianity? Whether the main doctrines of it can be proved to be the doctrines of Christ and his Apostles? If they can, the Protestant religion will be the true religion; to whatsoever causes the preaching of it was originally owing, or whatsoever may be the cha-

characters or personal faults of the first Reformers. *Peter* himself denied his master with oaths and curses, and was guilty of great dissimulation, and reprov'd for it by *St. Paul*; and yet these personal blemishes were no just reflection upon the cause of Christianity. Not to add, that God in his providence is oftentimes pleas'd to make use even of bad men to accomplish his own designs, and to over-rule even their vices to subserve the purposes of his wisdom and goodness.

It may therefore be allowed that *Luther* had his faults. And who is without them? But doth any consistent Protestant pretend to justify him in them? Or do his personal failings prove that he was not to be commended for bravely opposing the corrupt doctrines and practices of the Church of *Rome*? But when the Cardinal adds, that *Luther's ambition, and not being able to bear that the publishing the Pope's indulgences should be transferred from the monks of his order to the Predicant friars*, gave rise to his own sect; this is neither candidly nor truly said. *Luther* himself ascribes another reason of his conduct in opposing the indulgences; viz. *'because the unbounded licence of preaching indulgences occasioned many errors, was ridiculed by some in the taverns, and exposed the holy priesthood of the church to scorn.* Yea *Maimburg* himself, who wrote against *Luther*, acknowledges that *there were very scandalous abuses committed in the affair of the indulgences; and that it*

^r Istas positiones omnes coegit me ponere, quod viderem alios falsis opinionibus infici, alios per tabernas ridere, et sanctum sacerdotium ecclesiæ manifesto ludibrio habere, occasione tam effusæ licentiæ predicandarum veniarum. *Seckendorf*. l. 1. § 13. § 27.

cannot be denied but that this gave occasion to Lutheranism^t. An abundant justification of *Luther's* conduct this, in the opposition he began to the Church of *Rome*.

But was *Luther* as proud and imperious as the Cardinal makes him; are there no blemishes, no vices chargeable on the great men, doctors, and founders of orders in the church of *Rome*? We must as Protestants be excused from an over high opinion and veneration for them, because we know that many of them were weak and superstitious men, who placed religion in unnecessary abstinences, whimsical severities, and useless ceremonies, more than in real piety, and substantial virtue. Others of them are canonized for saints, only for their blind attachment to the See of *Rome*, and the corruptions of that Church; and their zeal against the pure and uncorrupted doctrines of Christ, and the professors of them. Others of them were insolent, bloody-minded and cruel persecutors; such as St. *Francis* and *Dominick*, who introduced the Inquisition, and were the occasion of innumerable violences and murders. Such men may pass for saints in the Church of *Rome*, which sanctifies the most outrageous wickednesses, when committed for her benefit and support; but with others, who have not divested themselves of all humanity, they will be abhorred and detested, as the plagues and curses of mankind.

Amongst these holy men and doctors, in which the Church of *Rome* glories, 'tis pity the Cardinal hath not produced the Popes, those visible heads

^t See *Secund. l. 1. Sect. 6.*

of their Hierarchy, those holy successors of *St. Peter*, under whom, as we are told, the whole Christian flock is united. But the reason of the Cardinal's silence on this head is obvious. He well knew the men, and that he had nothing to boast of in their lives and characters. *Platina* expressly calls many of them short-liv'd monsters; and tells us, that they obtained the Popedom by bribes; that they departed from the steps of *Peter*; were influenced by ambition, and governed by the most implacable resentments and hatreds. So that if the Church of *Rome* is to be judged of by the characters of her Popes, she must be esteemed as the most wicked, degenerate, and profligate church in the whole world.

As to the Protestant laity, it must be acknowledged that many of them are very corrupt, and live very unsuitable to the privileges they enjoy. But when the Cardinal adds, *ex Hæreticis nullus est bonus, no Heretick is good*; this is a specimen of his charity, and needs no answer. There were, I question not, too much reason for the complaints of the first Reformers against many who pretended to embrace the Reformation; but were those of the *Romish* communion less criminal? *Myconius*, who was pastor and super-intendant of *Gotha*, gives the following account of the miserable condition of the Church before the Reformation*. “The Antichristian Papacy was so
“abominable and foul a beast, that it could not
“be sufficiently described by *Paul* and *John*.
“The passion and satisfaction of Christ was

* *Christ, I. p. 325.*

* *Seckend. l. i. Sect. 2.*

“treated

treated like *Homer's Odyssees*, as a mere history. Nothing was mentioned about works really good; these were mean things. All methods were invented to bring in money to the priests and monks: They that gave most, were sure to merit eternal life. Rapes and adulteries were common. These were small crimes, easily to be expiated by the papal indulgence. Whores and whore-mongers came to purchase the grace of it." And as to the priests themselves, the canons, monks, and others of the clergy, in the town of *Gotha*, the same author says of them, "They were esteemed sacred, and such as could merit heaven for us. But their behaviour was so very vile and profligate, as that nothing in the whole world could exceed it: For being prohibited matrimony, and not having the gift of continency, they filled the city with rapes, adulteries, and sodomitical crimes." I forbear to mention many other testimonies of the like nature; and shall only add, that though, to the reproach of Protestants, there are many of them very corrupt and immoral, yet their vices are far from exceeding those of the Papists; even those that are committed at Rome itself, not only by the laity, but by their very cardinals, bishops, and priests. So little reason have they to boast of the holiness and virtue of those of their communion.

N O T E XI.

Bellarmino's next Note is, *The glory of miracles*. And this mark he divides into two parts: 1. *That miracles are necessary for the confirmation of a new faith,*

D

faith,

faith, and extraordinary mission. 2. That real miracles are effectual and sufficient for this purpose^y. From the first of these, the Cardinal infers that the Protestants have not the true Church amongst them; and from the latter, that the true Church is the Church of Rome. Let us consider each of these a little distinctly.

1. Miracles are necessary for the confirmation of a new faith and an extraordinary mission, and that therefore Protestants cannot be the true Church; because, though they preach a new faith, and are not sent by the ordinary prelates, they have no miracles to confirm their doctrine or mission. This is roundly said; but it hath the misfortune to be partly false, and partly nothing to the purpose. For,

(1.) 'Tis not universally true, that miracles are necessary for the confirmation of a new faith; i. e. of principles contrary to such as have been long receiv'd, and embrac'd by the generality of mankind; in which respect, principles of everlasting truth may be said to be new: For the main principles of all true religion are founded in the very reason and nature of things, and demonstrable to the minds of all impartial considerers by the strongest arguments, and need not the help of miracles to confirm them; and can never be made one jot more certain and true than they are in themselves, though ever so many wonders should be wrought in support of them. Thus the being and perfections of God, that he, and he only,

^y Gloria Miraculorum. Sunt autem duo fundamenta præmittenda. Unum, quod miracula sint necessaria ad novam fidem, vel extraordinarium missionem. Alterum, quod sint efficacia et sufficientia. *Ib. cap. 1.*

be worshiped and adored; that his worship
 must consist in purity of heart, and holiness of
 life, rather than in external rites and ceremonies;
 and that moral virtue is more excellent in it self,
 and acceptable to God, and conducive to the
 happiness of mankind, than immorality and vice:
 these, and the like great articles of religion,
 and upon the certain and unalterable founda-
 tions of reason and truth, and are easily disco-
 verable by mens reasonable powers without any
 help of revelation, if they will make a right and
 impartial use of them; and though miracles may
 sometimes proper to awaken mens attention to
 the consideration of these things, yet they need
 not miracles to ascertain their truth and certainty,
 nor to oblige men to believe and embrace them.
 And therefore, whosoever teaches such principles
 as these, he deserves to be believed and credited
 for the sake of the doctrines themselves; though
 he neither pretends to a divine mission, nor gives
 the proper testimonials of it by real and undoubt-
 ed miracles.

Nor doth the prevalence of contrary errors, and
 their having been long embraced by nations and
 kingdoms, make any alteration in the case: For
 the doctrines of true religion, when first pub-
 lished, will appear new to those, who have been
 brought up in old superstitions, which have been
 strengthened and confirmed by long practice, and
 universal example; yet when they are agreeable to,
 and may be demonstrated by the most evident rea-
 son, their appearing new can be no argument a-
 gainst their truth; and as they have truth and rea-
 son thus to support them, 'tis absurd to expect or

demand miracles to confirm them. And therefore, though Protestants make no pretences to miracles for the confirmation of their doctrines; and tho' when they first preached them, they were so far new, as they were contrary to those errors of Popery, which had universally obtained for several ages; yet as they were many of them agreeable to the most certain principles of reason, reason was sufficient to demonstrate their truth, without any supernatural evidence whatsoever; and to expect the testimony of miracles, in proof that angels, and dead men, and dead bodies, images and pictures, old relicks, crosses, and the like things, are not to be worshiped, is as idle and vain, as to demand miracles to prove that a man is not God, a bone is not a living man, or a wooden cross the person who was crucified and died upon it. Again,

(2.) Though the Protestant religion was a new faith when first preached, in respect of those corruptions which had for so many ages before prevailed in the Church of *Rome*, yet there needed no miracles to confirm and establish it; because in reality it was no new faith, but the ancient doctrine of the gospel, which *was at first preached by the Lord himself, and afterwards by his holy Apostles, God himself bearing them witness, by divers gifts and miracles, and signs of the Holy Ghost*; by which it was abundantly proved to be the doctrine of God, and upon which account all farther proof became entirely needless. The Reformation introduced no new gospel, but was only a revival of the old one; it only cleared the religion of Christ from those corruptions and idolatries, and absurdities, with which the follies and supersti-

tions

tions of men had blended it. And for this work they had sufficient authority and assistance, without any help of new miracles; *viz.* the infallible word of God, which contains an authentick account of the religion of Christ Jesus, and of that original evidence with which it was so gloriously confirmed. What need then of farther miracles, for the proof of what God had already set his seal to? Was not that which was given by Christ and his Apostles abundantly sufficient? If it was, Protestants have solid evidence to appeal to in confirmation of their religion; even the unquestionable miracles of Christ and his Apostles in the first age of the Church, which are the sure foundation of the Christian faith, and the only unquestionable evidence that can be safely depended on.

But now what miracles have the Papists to boast of, or that they can alledge in favour of their distinguishing doctrines; when those doctrines themselves were none of them ever so much as heard of in the Christian Church for above two whole centuries, and many of them not till seven, eight, or nine hundred years after the publication of the gospel? As their doctrines were never taught by Christ and his Apostles, their miracles could be no possible confirmation of them; and by consequence their faith, as it is truly a new faith, never preached by the Prophets of the Old Testament, nor by the Apostles of the New, many ages later than the gospel doctrine, and introduced upon the ruins of it, must have had miracles to support and confirm it, by the Cardinal's own principles; and therefore cannot be received as the doctrine of God, because it hath not had the

miraculous confirmation, which he himself allows every new faith ought to have. Farther,

(3.) Though I will not pretend to say, that the Reformation was a real miracle; yet it was brought about in so unexpected a manner, and by such extraordinary methods, as will justify any sober person in ascribing it to the influence and conduct of divine providence. It came into the world just as Christianity did, in a time of the grossest ignorance and darkness. It was propagated just as that was, by preaching, reason, and argument, and by the sufferings and blood of its confessors and martyrs. The first promoters of it were comparatively mean men, that had neither birth nor riches to recommend them. It was first published in a corner, and yet had afterwards an amazing success through almost all the nations of *Europe*; so that it might well be compared to the leaven, and the mustard-seed in the gospel. It was opposed as the gospel was, by the powers of this world, and all the methods of the most cruel and bloody persecutions. And yet it triumphed over all opposition, prevailed against long established corruptions, and all the arts and violences of men to crush it in its infancy; till at last it became the religion of nations and kingdoms, and continues to be so to this day, notwithstanding the numberless endeavours that have been made use of wholly to extirpate and destroy it. And doth not the hand of God appear in all this? May we not truly say, *This is the Lord's doing, and 'tis wonderful in our eyes?* If the efficacy of any doctrine be a note of the true Church, surely, as Protestants, we have some claim to it; espe-

especially as this efficacy hath been only owing to the nature of the doctrine we preach, and not to any subtleties or violences that we have practised on mankind to embrace and receive it.

(4.) As to the mission of the first Reformers to preach the doctrines of the gospel, in opposition to the corruptions of Popery; as they did not pretend to preach any thing but what was contained in the sacred writings, and as they never assumed the character of *extraordinary messengers from God*, the testimony of miracles became absolutely needless. They were generally speaking men of learning and abilities, capable of understanding the original records of Christianity, and therefore capable of explaining those records to others, and preaching those truths which they themselves believed. And this was furniture and qualification enough for the mission to which they pretended; and indeed every man, who is thus qualified, hath a right to preach the gospel of Christ, and to oppose with all his might those corruptions which deform or destroy the Church of God.

Tho' therefore it is certainly true, as *Bellarmino* says, that *the first Reformers were not sent by the ordinary prelates*; will it follow from thence, that they had no right to preach the gospel? By no means. For how came those prelates to be the *Senders General*? How came they to have the sole right to commission men to *labour in the word and doctrine*? We demand a copy of their warrant and commission for this purpose from Christ or his Apostles, and they must excuse us from believing them upon their own word.

The

The Apostle, writing to the saints and faithful brethren at Colosse, exhorts them: *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another^z. And again, Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt; that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man^a. In his epistle to the Thessalonians, he commands them: Warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, quench not the spirit, despise not prophesyings; prove all things, and hold fast that which is good^b. And in his second epistle: We command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed^c. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews tells them, for the time, i. e. considering how long they had been converted, ye ought to be teachers^d. St. James, writing to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, lets them know, If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death^e; by which he supposes one Christian capable of converting another, who errs from the truth, from the error of his way, and saving his soul. St. Peter calls the scattered strangers a royal priesthood^f; and commands them, As every man hath received the gift, even*

^z Colos. iii. 16.

^c 2 Theff. iii. 6, 14.

^f 1 Pet. ii. 9.

^a Id. iv. 6.

^d Heb. v. 12.

^b 1 Theff. v. 14—21.

^e James v. 19, 20.

minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, as of the ability which God giveth^s. And finally, St. John tells those he wrote to: Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they are of God^h. These, and many other like passages that might be mentioned, are warrant enough for any serious and understanding Christians to teach, admonish, and, if they can, to convert others who have erred from the truth; to try the spirits of those who pretend to be teachers and prophets, and to oppose them if they find them to be antichristian and erroneous spirits. And therefore, though the first Reformers had no mission from Popish prelates and bishops, they had what is much better, an abundant warrant from the sacred writings, to protest against, and warn men of the corruptions of the Church of *Rome*; and to preach to as many as would hear them, the doctrines of pure and undefiled Christianity.

The bishops and prelates were almost all of them in a confederacy against righteousness and truth. The corruptions of religion were the things by which they maintained their luxury, pomp and avarice; so that it was manifestly against their interest to encourage a Reformation, or commission men to promote it. Must therefore Christianity ever remain under those corruptions, because it was the secular interest of the bishops and clergy to support them? Must no

^s 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.

^h 1 John iv. 1.

men preach the pure and uncorrupted religion of Christ, because the bishops refused to send them; and the whole gospel become ineffectual to convert and save men, because the ordinary prelates made their profits from their ignorance, vices, and ruin? Ridiculous supposition! to imagine, that God hath made the religion of his Son to depend on the mission of interested, designing priests; and the preaching of his gospel to be subject to the pleasure of those who are enemies to the purity and governing design of it. The mission of bishops and prelates is in it self a trifling circumstance, of little or no importance, of which there is little or no mention in the sacred writings; and if men are otherwise qualified by the providence and grace of God, by sufficient knowledge, by strong inclination, and a real undissembled piety, to preach the gospel, they have one of the best commissions from God that they can desire, to engage in this sacred work, without any need of miracles to confirm their mission; because every man hath a natural right to propagate truth and righteousness, and 'tis every Christian's certain duty to promote the religion of God and the Redeemer, as he hath ability and opportunity, though all the prelates in the world should refuse to authorize him; or, in the language of the Church, by imposition of hands to ordain him. But thus much as to the first part of this Note. I now come

2. To consider the other part of this argument, viz. the miracles which the Papists boast of in confirmation of their religion, and as wrought by, and in favour of their Church; or to prove that it is, in reality, the true Church of Christ.

(1.) And

(1.) And here let it be observed, that whatever miracles can be supposed to prove, they can never prove the truth of real absurdities. They can never prove that the whole is more, or bigger than it self; *i. e.* that one individual single body or can be ten thousand bodies, and present in ten thousand places at the self-same time. They can never prove that a single body is it self, and different from it self; *i. e.* that a wafer, under the accidents of bread, is really a man; much less that it is God, the eternal, uncreated God; because these are self-evident contradictions, and therefore incapable in their very nature of being proved by any kind of evidence whatsoever.

(2.) Again; miracles can never prove the truth of doctrines contradictory to each other, or of doctrines contrary to such as have been already sufficiently proved by real and uncontested miracles; because this is absolutely to destroy the very evidence it self, and making it equally to serve the purposes of truth and falshood; nothing being more plain, than that contrary doctrines cannot possibly be on both sides true. If therefore it is a true doctrine, and hath been confirmed by the testimony of God himself, that *there is but one mediator between God and man, even the Son of God, Christ Jesus*; no miracles can prove that angels and saints are mediators as well as Christ, because these are two opposite contradictory doctrines, one of which must be necessarily and unavoidably false. And farther,

(3.) Miracles can never prove that idolatry and superstition is the true and acceptable worship of God; that images, and pictures, and relicks, and

the like dead and senseless things, are objects of worship; both because 'tis absurd to suppose it, and contrary to common sense and reason; and because God can never give a sanction to his own dishonour, countenance what is contrary to his own glory, or command men to give that worship to the creature which is not their due, but due only to himself, the eternal and blessed Creator. And therefore, as these absurdities, contradictions and impieties, are all adopted into the faith of the Church of *Rome*, 'tis impossible that any real miracles can have been wrought by God in vindication of them, or indeed that they can be so much as capable of any demonstration or proof. 'Tis in vain therefore that the Papists appeal to the miracles of Christ and his Apostles, which were wrought only in confirmation of those doctrines which were taught by Christ and his Apostles; and not as proofs of those corruptions, which they have introduced into his Church, to the disgrace of Christ's religion, and the manifest perversion of the great design and real tendency of his gospel. Since therefore the miracles of Christ and his inspired Apostles were wrought in confirmation of doctrines contrary to those taught by the Church of *Rome*, that Church wants this proof of the truth of her doctrines, and of consequence this note of her being the true Church.

What must we say then of all those miracles of which the Church of *Rome* boasts, for a succession of many ages? I answer, that supposing any real miracles have been wrought in vindication of her corrupt doctrines and practices, the workers of them are by no means to be regarded and

marked to; no, not if he who did them were an angel from heaven; because the gospel of Christ Jesus is immutable, and the men are pronounced accursed who willingly pervert it.

'Tis laid down by St. Paul, as one mark of the great apostacy from the Christian church, and of the character of *the man of sin, and son of perdition, that his coming should be after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in those that perish*: And, of consequence, this power, and these signs and wonders, are not to be regarded, as we value our salvation, and would not be given up of God to strong delusions to believe a lye. Hence our blessed Lord cautions his disciples: *There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs, and wonders: But, behold, I have told you before; wherefore, believe it not*^k.

So that if the Papists teach you another gospel than what the Apostles preached, believe them not; no, not if they perform unquestionable signs and wonders. You may assure your selves those signs could never be done by the influence of that Holy Spirit that guided the Apostles, who is the Spirit of truth, and can never contradict his own testimony, nor confirm a religion contrary to Christ's. And therefore, if the miracles boasted of by Papists, as wrought in confirmation of their errors, were real; they were unquestionably *lying wonders* of the working of Satan; wonders wrought in confirmation of a lye; or

ⁱ 2 Theff. ii. 9.

^k Matt. xxiv. 24, 25, 26.

else the delusive impositions of that evil spirit to deceive and pervert those, *who have pleasure in unrighteousness, and will not receive the love of the truth, that they may be saved.*

The truth indeed is, that many, if not all, of the pretended miracles of the Church of Rome are the inventions of idle, superstitious monks; or the impostures of crafty, designing priests, to create in the people a reverence for their own corruptions, and to bind them the faster in obedience and subjection to themselves. The legends of their saints abound with the most palpable absurdities, and romantick impossibilities; their miracles have no characters of probability attending them, nor any authentick vouchers to support them. Many of them have been proved to be mere frauds and cheats, and others of them may be performed by men of common ingenuity and dexterity. So that there is no proof of real miracles having been ever wrought amongst them; and therefore, 'tis with as little truth and modesty, that they boast of the glory of their miracles, as of the purity of their doctrine.

N O T E XII.

The Cardinal's twelfth Note is, *'The light of prophecy; for as Christ promised the church the gift of miracles, so also he did the gift of prophecy,* in the third chapter of the prophecy of *Joel*. To this a short answer will be sufficient.

¹ Lumen propheticum. Sicut enim Christus promittit Ecclesie donum miraculorum, ita etiam, *Joel* iii. promittit donum prophetie. *Cap. 15.*

1. That prophecy can no more prove than mixture of false doctrines are true, or that the idolatry of the Church of *Rome* is the true religion of Jesus Christ.

2. That the prophecy of *Joel* doth not in the least assure the church that the gift of prophecy should be a permanent gift: Yea, *St. Peter* seems to assert the contrary, when he tells the *Jews*, that the effusion of the Spirit on the Apostles at the feast of *Pentecost*, was that which was spoken of by the prophet *Joel*^m, i. e. it was the real accomplishment of that prediction by him; and therefore the continuation of that gift beyond the apostolic age, was not necessary to that accomplishment, and therefore no necessary mark of the true Church.

3. If prophecy be a necessary note of the true Church, it certainly follows that the Church can never be, in some part or other of it, without this gift; because whenever it wholly ceases, then the essential mark of the true Church ceases too; and consequently the Church of *Rome* can never make out her claim to this character: Because *Calmarine* himself doth not undertake to prove that his Church was never without it; and only mentions three persons, *St. Bennet*, *St. Barnard*, and *St. Francis*, who had it since the time of the *Reformation*, i. e. about the compass of one thousand four hundred years. And therefore this gift can be no essential mark of the true Church, nor the want of it amongst Protestants any proof that they are not a part of it; or else the Church of

Ecclesiæ
prophetiæ.

^m Acts ii. 16.

That

Rome

Rome herself can have no pretensions to this character, which, for the greatest part of above one thousand two hundred years, appears to be evidently destitute of it.

4. Nor indeed is there any solid proof that they, to whom they attribute this divine gift, ever possessed it. The many fabulous legends they have invented, and the base methods they have taken to support their errors, render all the accounts of the prophecies of their pretended saints justly liable to suspicion. Men may sometimes make very probable guesses of future things, because of a certain concurrence of affairs, which render such events highly probable; without ever deserving the character of prophets, or indeed having a title to the character of good men.

5. The religion of Protestants, which is the religion of the Bible, was deliver'd by men really possessed of a prophetick spirit; and, by consequence, hath the confirmation of prophecy, as well as miracles. Whereas, the distinguishing doctrines of the Church of *Rome* were none of them preached by Apostles or Prophets, and are not to be found in the sacred writings; and thus have neither the evidence of miracles or prophecy to support them. I may justly add on this head,

6. That amongst Protestants, there have been divers good and pious men, who have spoken of future things with great clearness, and which have actually accordingly come to pass; and who therefore have at least as much a right to claim the honour of this prophetick inspiration, as any persons whatsoever that can be mentioned in the Church of *Rome*.

NOTE XIII.

The next note is, ⁿ *The confession even of adversaries in favour of the Church of Rome; whereas the Catholics are never found to praise, or commend the doctrine, or life of Hereticks:* But this mark proves nothing more, than that Protestants have more charity, or less prudence than the Papists. If Protestants commend any thing that is commendable in any of the writers of the *Romish* Church, they act according to the rules of justice and charity, how much soever they differ from them in the essentials of religion. And if Papists give a general censure, and reproach, and revile all Protestants, whatever be their virtues and excellencies, merely because they differ from them in their religious principles, 'tis an argument that they have neither justice nor charity in them; and consequently can be no argument that they are the Church of Christ.

Besides, all consistent Protestants unanimously condemn the Church of *Rome* as guilty of heresy, schism, and great corruptions in the doctrine and worship of Christ; and though some may allow her to be the true Church, notwithstanding all her gross abuses of the Christian religion, they are generally such as have favour'd the superstitions of *Rome*, and shewn a very good inclination to become reconciled to it. This was the case of *Laud* and his brethren in the time of

ⁿ Confessio adversariorum. Nunquam inveniuntur Catholici laudare aut approbasse doctrinam aut vitam ullorum hæreticorum.

Charles I. and of all those of the clergy in the present time, if any such there be, who are his favourers and followers. They want to maintain the character of God's ambassadors, and the notion of a lineal descent from the Apostles, as their successors in power and dignity; and therefore, the Church of *Rome* must be a true Church to convey the succession down to them, though she hath scarce a single mark of the Church of Christ belonging to her.

But the praises of such men are of as little efficacy, as the curses of the church of *Rome*. They neither of them prove any thing at all: And 'tis mere trifling with the world to put the approbation of mortal men against the censure of scripture, and the sentence of the spirit of God. The doctrine and practice of the church of *Rome*, are expressly condemned by the oracles of truth; and therefore, it signifies nothing though the whole world should justify or commend her.

N O T E XIV.

The next note is, ° *The unhappy exit, or death of those who have opposed the church of Rome.* Thus the Cardinal tells us, that *Luther* and *Oecolampadius* died suddenly, *Zuinglius* was killed in war against the Catholics, *Carlostadius* was killed by the devil, and *Calvin* was eaten up of worms, and died cursing and blaspheming: There is need of but few words to shew

° Infelix exitus, seu finis eorum qui ecclesiam oppugnant, *Cap. 17.*

the impertinence and inconclusiveness of this mark.

For the arguing from the manner of mens death, to the goodness or badness of the cause and principles they have espoused, hath no foundation in reason or scripture, and can proceed from nothing but superstition or presumption. 'Tis mere superstition to imagine, that God goes out of the common method of his providence to punish the sins of particular persons; or that the accidents which prove fatal to them, and generally happen according to the ordinary course of things, are inflicted on them as judgments for extraordinary offences. 'Tis also great presumption, as it implies a bold and rash determining concerning those secret methods of the divine conduct and government, which can never be known without an immediate revelation.

'Tis also contrary to the plainest determinations of the sacred writings, and the judgment of the Spirit of God contained therein. The wise man tells us, *That all things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and the wicked, to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: As is the good, so is the sinner; and he that feareth, as he that feareth an oath*^p. And again, *There be just men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; and there be wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous*^q. Sometimes righteous and good men are cut off by an unexpected stroke: *For there is*

^p Eccles. ix. 2.

^q Id. viii. 14.

a just man that perishes in his righteousness, whilst wicked men live in prosperity, and prolong their days: For there is a wicked man that prolongs his life in wickedness.

The truth of these observations may be proved by many facts, and therefore, were all the instances mentioned by the Cardinal just as he represents them, they would prove nothing of what he alledges them for, *viz.* that the churches of the reformation are not the churches of Christ, or that the first reformers were evil men and Hereticks.

But he is mistaken in his facts, or hath willfully misrepresented them. Of *Luther*, he says, that he died suddenly in the night, having chearfully, and in good health, eaten a plentiful supper in the evening: But this is not true; for *Luther* had been in a declining state of health for several months before his death, and had lived in the constant expectation of, and preparation for it. The evening before he died he supped with his friends, and talked chearfully with them both upon serious and other affairs. In the intervals of his pains he cried out, *O heavenly Father, though I must be taken out of this life, yet, I certainly know that I shall dwell for ever with thee, and that no one shall take me out of thy hands.* And after a solemn confession of his faith in Christ, the agonies of death came on him, and folding his hands together, he gently breathed out his last, and died.

This is the relation of *Justus Jonas*, who was present at his decease, as given by *Seckendorf*,

[^r Eccles. vii. 15.

[^f Lib. 3. Sect. 36. §. 133.

utterly destroys the credit of the story of his
 a sudden death: But supposing he had thus
 what argument is this of a punishment
 from God? A sudden death to a good man is so
 from being an instance of the divine displea-
 re, that 'tis rather a very desirable circumstance,
 rather to be asked of God, than deprecated as a
 punishment; not to add, that the preservation of
 Luther for so many years, from 1517, when he
 began to preach against indulgence, to the
 year 1546, when he died, in opposition to the
 endeavours of his enemies to destroy him, is a
 much stronger proof that his cause was owned,
 and he himself under the special protection of
 God, than the pretended suddenness of his death,
 had it been fact, could have been, that 'twas a
 punishment inflicted on him by God, for his op-
 posing the usurpations, idolatries, and absurdi-
 ties, of the Church of *Rome*.

As to *Zuinglius*, 'tis acknowledged, that he
 died in war, in defence of the religion and li-
 berities of his country: And is such a circum-
 stance to his dishonour, or an argument of his
 offering a sacrifice to the divine vengeance, or of
 the badness of the cause for which he fought?
 What then shall we say to *Josiah*, king of *Judah*,
 concerning whom the sacred historian writes:
He did that which was right in the sight of the
Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father,
and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the
left. And yet this pious prince was slain in war
 by *Necho* king of *Egypt*: But did this prove that
 the superstitions of *Egypt* was the true religion,

† 2 Chron. xxxiv. 2.

in opposition to that which God himself had established amongst the *Jews*?

As to *Oecolampadius*, he died, as *Melchior Adams* informs us, in a very gentle and desirable manner, not suddenly, but after fifteen days illness, of an ulcer upon the *Os Sacrum*; repeating from beginning to end, the fifty first *Psalms*, a little before his death; and with his last breath crying out, *Lord Jesus save me*, in the presence of ten of his brethren, who agreed in this account of him ^u.

As to *Caroloſtadius*, the story of his being killed by the devil is ridiculous, and hath no authority to support it; the epistle of the ministers of *Basil*, mentioned by the Cardinal, having never been produced, and being no where to be found. *Petrus Boquinus*, who was at the funeral of *Caroloſtadius*, hath exposed this vile forgery; and tells us, that he died, amongst many others, of the plague, which then cruelly raged in *Germany*, and at *Basil*, on *Christmas-day*; and that he was honourably attended to his funeral by great numbers of the academy ^x.

As to *Calvin*, the Cardinal's whole account is an impudent imposture; and *Bolzec*, from whom he takes it, a man neither of morals or credit sufficient to attest it. He bore an irreconcilable hatred to *Calvin*, for having been imprisoned at *Geneva*, and banished from the territories of it, upon account of something he had delivered about predestination. He was originally a *Car-melite* friar, and turned Protestant and Physician,

^u Melchior. Adam. vit. Germ. Theolog. p. 57. Edit. Francof.

^x Melchior. Adam. p. 87.

and afterwards returned to Popery again, and prostituted his wife to the canons of *Autun* in *Burgundy* : An admirable witness of this infamous story of *Calvin's* death!

Beza, who was a minister himself at *Geneva*, and administered the sacrament to *Calvin* a little before his death, tells us he was naturally of a thin consumptive constitution, which he greatly impaired by long abstinence, and indefatigable study and labour. He died of a complication of distempers, though the immediate cause of it was an *Asthma*. A little before his death, the *Synods* and *Senators* paid him a visit, to whom he gave an affectionate and christian exhortation. The month of *May*, in which he died, he spent almost in continual prayer, with eyes lift up to heaven, when the *Asthma* had almost stopped his voice ; oftentimes repeating the words of *David*, *My voice was silent, O Lord, because thou didst it.* May the 19th, he supped with his brethren, the ministers, and told them he should never more sit with them at table ; and from that day, to the 27th of the same month, when he died, he lay almost dead, and at last departed in the most gentle manner, without almost a sigh or groan, retaining his senses and reason to the last : This is *Beza's* account, who was with him almost continually in his sickness, and at his death, and is an abundant confutation of the scandalous and vile account of *Bolzec*, and *Bellarmino* from *Caracian*. And, though any man of honour and candour would have been ashamed to have retailed so impudent a piece of scandal ; yet, to do the cardinal justice, nothing less could be expected from

from him, who lays it down as a certain fact, *That no Catholicks are ever found to praise or approve the doctrine, or life, of Heathens or Hereticks* ^y.

But, supposing the Cardinal's stories to have been all true; yet, if such unfortunate deaths prove the badness of the first reformers cause, How justly may the argument be retorted on the Papists? How many of the very heads of their church have died sudden, violent, infamous deaths? *Platina* tells us, that Pope *Leo V.* was deposed by *Christopher*, and died in jail through grief; that *John XI.* was taken by the Soldiers and stifled to death with a bolster; that *John XIII.* a wretch, who, from his youth, had been addicted to the vilest lusts, was taken and killed in the very act of adultery; that *Benedict VI.* was strangled or famished to death in St. *Angelo's* castle at *Rome*; that *John XXII.* who promised himself a long life, was crushed to death by the fall of a new chamber at his palace at *Viterbo*; with many other instances of the like nature, that might be mentioned, if such kind of arguments were any thing to the purpose. But I proceed to

N O T E XV.

Which is, ^z *The temporal felicity, conferred by God on those, who have defended the church; for, says he, catholick princes have never heartily ad-*

^y De Not. Ec. Cap. 16.

^z Felicitas temporalis, divinitus iis collata, qui ecclesiam defenderunt. Nunquam enim catholici principes ex animo Deo adhererunt, quin facillime de hostibus triumpharent.

bered to God, but they easily triumphed over their
 enemies. And for the proof of this he produces
 many instances out of the Old Testament, of *Abra-*
ham, Moses, Joshua, David, and others; and of
Constantine, Theodosius, and others, under the
 New Testament dispensation: But, that this is a
 very uncertain and fallacious note, will appear by
 a little consideration; for, if temporal felicity be
 a note of the true Church, it must be such a note
 as is peculiar to, and inseparable from it, and as
 never doth or can agree to any false and antichri-
 stian church whatsoever; for no demonstration
 can be plainer than this, that if temporal felicity
 sometimes belongs to the false church, it can
 never be a discriminating note, or mark of the
 true one.

Now, though *Moses*, and *David*, and other
 good princes amongst the *Jews*, had very signal
 successes from God; and, though an adherence
 to true religion and virtue, hath a tendency to
 secure princes and nations the divine protection
 and blessing; yet, that good princes have not been
 always successful against bad ones, is evident from
 the instance before mentioned of *Josiah*, who was
 slain by the idolatrous king of *Egypt*; and from
 the *Maccabees*, of whom *Judas Maccabæus* was
 slain fighting against *Bacchides*, and his army
 murdered: *Jonathan*, his brother, was treacherously
 seized and slain by *Tryphon*: *Simon*, his brother,
 was traiterously murdered by *Ptolomy* his son in
 law; whereas the Cardinal produces the *Macca-*
bes, as instances to prove the temporal prospe-
 rity of good princes, and their triumphs, by the
 help of God, over their enemies.

G

But,

But, supposing no instances could be produced of *Jewish* princes, but what had been prosperous were not the kings of the *heathen* nations altogether as successful? How often were the *Jews* themselves oppressed, beaten, enslaved, and carried into captivity by them? What were the successes of their most fortunate princes, in comparison of those of *Tiglathpileser*, *Salmanasar*, *Nebuchadonosor*, and others, to whom they were successively tributaries and subjects? Now, if temporal felicity, successes, victories, largeness of empire, and multitude of riches, are marks of the true Church, we must not look for the church amongst the *Jews*, but amongst the *heathen* nations and princes; who could oftentimes boast of this note, and possessed it in a much more remarkable manner than the *Jewish* princes and nation ever did.

Besides, if temporal felicity be a mark of the Church, where was the Church of God in the days of *Elijah*? *Ahab* was an idolatrous prince, and a great encourager of idolatry in his kingdom; and the *Jews* were so universally in the king's measures, that *Elijah* complains to God: *The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away*^a. 'Tis true, God tells him, *I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him*^b: But they were oppressed, and persecuted, and had not one mark of temporal prosperity to prove them to be the Church of God.

^a 1 Kings xix. 14.

^b Id. Ver. 18.

Much less can such prosperity be a discriminating mark of the Christian Church. The Cardinal, elate with his own purple, titles, emoluments, splendor, and riches, forgot surely the circumstances and doctrine of Jesus Christ; that himself was despised and rejected of men, and at last crucified and slain by wicked and ungodly hands; and that he taught, that whosoever would become his disciple, *must take up his cross and follow him.*

Nor had the Apostles of our Lord any thing of the glare of worldly grandure and prosperity to attract the eyes, and allure the hopes of mankind: they *approved themselves the ministers of God, with much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, and in pressures, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, and in fastings^c.* And to the generality of those they converted, St. Paul tells the *Corinthians: Ye see your calling, brethren; how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish, weak, base, and despised things of the world, that no flesh should glory in his presence^d.* And as to their doctrine they taught, *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution^e; and that we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God^f.* And accordingly for three hundred years, at least, the Christian Church had not much of this mark of the Cardinal's belonging to her, but was exposed to, and harrassed by perpetual persecution; when almost every year produced new con-

^c 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5.
Acts xiv. 22.

^d 1 Cor. i. 26, &c.

^e 2 Tim. iii. 12.

fessors and martyrs, and the very name of a Christian was made criminal. How then can that be a discriminating mark of the Church of Christ, which that Church wanted for three hundred years? Or are the essential marks of it altered since that time? Protestants will expect some good authority for this, before they will easily believe it. Besides, what will become of this note in the days of Antichrist, when as the Cardinal allows, *such will be the cruelty of the persecution under him, as to hinder all the publick exercises of true religion*^s? If this be true, and yet if, as he affirms against *Sotus*^h, that most cruel persecution shall not wholly extinguish the faith and religion of Christ; then the true Church will, and may subsist without temporal prosperity, even in circumstances of the most dreadful persecution: And therefore the Cardinal, as he begins his Notes with a mere name, ends them with a manifest contradiction; affirming temporal prosperity to be a distinguishing note of the true Church, when, at the same time, he allows it can and will subsist without it.

As to all the instances he brings of the prosperity of Christian princes, they are nothing to the purpose; since it may be easily proved, that Catholick princes have often come to violent ends, and been very unfortunate in their wars. *Henry III.* and *IV.* of *France*, were both murdered by assassins: *Mary, Queen of Scotland*, lost her head upon the block: And *James the Second of England*, a zealot for *Popery*, was forced to abdicate

^s De Rom. Pont. l. 3. c. 4.

^h Id. Ibid. c. 17.

crown, and died in exile. How many victo-
 ries have been gained over Christian princes by
 the *Turks*? How many by Protestant Hereticks
 over Catholick Kings? Queen *Elizabeth*, an
 heretical Queen, triumphed over the invincible
Armada, and baffled all the power of *Spain*, and
 had a glorious reign of above forty-four years
 continuance: *Lewis XIV.* of *France*, that most
 Christian king, had his armies often defeated,
 and all his lawrels taken from him; and might
 have been deprived of his kingdom too by an he-
 retical general, had it not been for the treachery
 of faithless men, who betrayed their country,
 and were hastily introducing a Popish Pretender.
 Truly it self, the seat of the beast, is at this day
 the seat of war; and Catholick princes are de-
 stroying each other, whilst the chief Protestant
 powers are looking on at a distance, and their
 subjects enjoying the blessings of peace and plenty.
 Fallacious is this argument of temporal felicity,
 and so little conclusive for the cause of him that
 brings it.

And thus have I gone through these fifteen
 notes; and shewn you that many of them are
 impertinent and false, and no notes at all of the
 Church of Christ; and that those of them that
 are good, do not belong to the Church of *Rome*:
 that, as she hath no true marks of the Church
 of Christ belonging to her, she ought to be esteemed
 and avoided by all as an antichristian church.

And truly she hath the marks of such a church
 evidently belonging to her. Had *St. Paul* been wit-
 nesses to the insolence and impiety of the Popes, those
 heads of the Church of *Rome*, he could not have
 his given

given a more exact description of them, than he hath done in *the man of sin, and son of perdition*¹.

1. He opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshiped, *2 Theff. ii. 4.*

2. He sitteth as God, in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God, *Ibid.*

3. His coming is after the working of Satan, with power, and signs, and lying wonders, and all deceiveableness of unrighteousness, *Ver. 9, 10.*

4. The seat of this beast is mystical *Babylon*, *Rev. xviii. 5.* that great city,

5. Which hath seven heads or mountains, *Rev. xvii. 9.*

6. In which dwells the woman, that great whore, which is arrayed in purple, and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, *Ver. 4.*

7. That sits upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, *ver. 3.* Such as, *Lord God, Most Holy Father; Optimus, Maximus, Greatest and Best.*

8. That reigneth over the kings of the earth, *Rev. xvii. 18.*

9. That sits upon many waters; which are the people, multitudes, and nations, and tongues, that she hath bewitched with her idolatries, *Ver. 15.*

10. Which hath gotten drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, *Ver. 6.*

11. Upon her forehead this name is written, MYSTERY, *Rev. xvii. 5.* Transubstantiation.

12. The merchants of the earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies,

¹ 2 Theff. ii. 3, &c.

Rev. xviii. 3. by the sales of indulgences, masses, relicks, *agnus Dei*'s, and the like merchandize of the priests of *Rome*.

13. She deals in slaves, and souls of men, *Ver. 13.*

14. She teaches doctrines of devils, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving, 1 *Tim. iv. 1, &c.* And,

15. She hath beguiled men by a voluntary humility; and hath introduced and established the worship of Angels, *Col. ii. 18.* and the honouring *Mazzeims*, *i. e.* the souls of dead men, with gold, and silver, and precious stones, and valuable things, by the invocation of saints, veneration of their relicks and images; both which are adorned in the Church of *Rome* in the most sumptuous and costly manner.

These fifteen notes I would oppose to the Cardinal's; and I, in my conscience, think they every one belong to the Church of *Rome*. And as these are evidently the marks of Antichrist, of that beast which it was prophesied should ascend out of the bottomless pit, let us all take heed how we worship and receive her mark: *For, if any man worship the beast, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation^k.* And when we think of the souls of those which she hath slain for the word of God, and the testimony which they held, let us, in abhorrence of this impiety and cruelty, cry out: HOW LONG, O LORD, HOLY AND TRUE, WILT THOU NOT JUDGE AND AVENGE THEIR BLOOD, ON THEM THAT DWELL ON THE EARTH!

^k Rev. xiv. 10.

Adhere therefore, my brethren, to the Protestant religion ; I mean the religion of the New Testament, which contains the whole of the Christian scheme, and is your surest guide to salvation and happiness. If, indeed, you are in love with slavery, and would have lordly priests tyrannize over your consciences, your persons, and estates ; if you choose ignorance instead of knowledge, superstition and idolatry instead of pure and acceptable religion, and regard more the inventions of men than the commands of God, Popery is the religion ready for your acceptance: But, if you love your God, your Redeemer, your souls, your bodies, your children, your estates, and country, Popery must be your abhorrence ; which is a religion only fit for slaves and fools, who have sacrificed all the valuable interests of mankind, or have not sense sufficiently to prize them. Be thankful to God therefore for the privileges you enjoy ; educate your children firmly in the principles of civil and religious liberty. Walk worthy your obligations and privileges, that God may not be provoked to withdraw his protection from you ; nor to give you up into the hands of men, who, where-ever they prevail, bring ruin and slavery, inquisitions and tortures with them ; and whose true character it is, THAT THEIR TENDER MERCIES ARE CRUELITIES.



F I N I S

